

Ripples from the Yellowstone River

Montana 63rd Session—January 2013 Update

EXHIBIT

DATE

HB

Common Sense Conservation on the Yellowstone

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Working Relationships Yield a Shared Vision

The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YRDC or Council) is comprised of representatives from ten conservation districts bordering the main stem of the Yellowstone River and the Chair of the YRDC's Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Its **purpose is to provide local leadership, assistance, and guidance for the wise use and conservation** of the river's natural resources to sustain and improve social, environmental, and economic values.

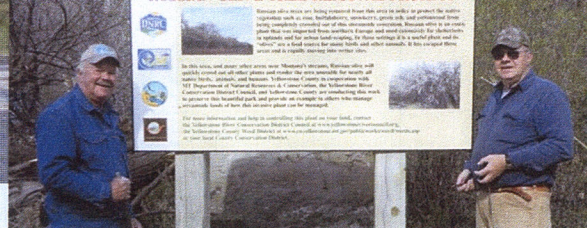
CES HEALTH ASSESSMENT



The Yellowstone River Cumulative Effects Study (CES) is unprecedented in terms of the **grassroots watershed approach** to river management. The study, authorized by the US Congress in the **Water Resources Development Act**, is a comprehensive investigation designed to determine the hydrologic, biological, and socioeconomic cumulative impacts or health of the river. Increased OTO-funding from the State of Montana is critical to:

- ☑ Assist with the operational expenses of the Technical Advisory Committee—a body of **Montana scientists working for the YRDC** to finish the CES by 2015.
- ☑ Assist with operational expenses for the Resource Advisory Committee—an active group of **Yellowstone Basin residents working with the YRDC** to develop BMP's.

RUSSIAN OLIVE TREE REMOVAL PROJECT

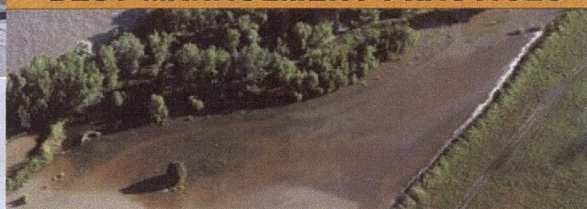


INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive plants like Russian olive and saltcedar are choking out native species and endangering the health of the Yellowstone River. With the help of our partners, including the Montana DNRC, we have:

- ☑ Reached out to more than **33,000 residents** of the Yellowstone River corridor about the threat of Russian olive and saltcedar.
- ☑ Demonstrated cost effective management techniques and **removed more than 50 acres of Russian olive** from riparian areas.
- ☑ Sponsored **tours and workshops** in Yellowstone National Park and six Montana counties targeted toward farmers, ranchers, private landowners and community leaders.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



The CES has already proven its worth in protecting public health and safety during Exxon's oil spill on the river in 2011. An early part of cumulative effects analysis, the development of a predicted **channel migration zone (CMZ)**, was used in a BMP to help understand the complexities of making decisions about resource uses in proximity to the Yellowstone River's channel flows. YRDC BMP's include:

- ☑ **Boater Safety & Watercraft Passage**
- ☑ **Fish Passage & Entrainment Prevention**
- ☑ **Increasing Irrigation Efficiency** through Ditch Leakage Reduction
- ☑ Improved **Land Use Planning**: CMZ Maps
- ☑ Managing **Russian olive and Saltcedar**